



**CITY OF SAN CARLOS
TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: September 15, 2009

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDER RESOLUTION PROVIDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE TRAFFIC REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED TRANSIT VILLAGE PROJECT AND THE PROPOSED SAN CARLOS AVENUE TRANSIT-ORIENTED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, C9491

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt resolution (Attachment 1) recommending consideration of the Traffic Report (Attachment 2) for the proposed Transit Village project and the proposed San Carlos Avenue transit-oriented capital improvement project, C9491.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The traffic report addresses two related projects: 1) a development proposal for the Transit Village and 2) a City-funded project to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation on San Carlos Avenue.

The fiscal implications of the proposed Transit Village project are within the purview of the Planning Commission and City Council.

The financial picture for capital project C9491, which was reviewed in the staff report for August 18, 2009, has recently changed. Part of the adopted budget for this project was a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Grant from City/County Association of Government (C/CAG) in the amount of \$182,000. On August 28, 2009, C/CAG staff informed the City that these grant funds must be obligated by March 2010 and that it would not be practicable to use them for work within the state's El Camino Real right of way. Thus, it will not be possible to use this grant as originally intended because the improvements to San Carlos Avenue are only conceptual at this point; it would take at least a year to review the concepts with the community and complete the design of the project. Also, the improvements to San Carlos Avenue would require some work within the state right of way. Accordingly, staff is currently developing the scope of a new project to use the TOD grant – the 2010 Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement Project. Part of project C9491 can be accomplished with the grant: the proposed changes to the intersections of San Carlos Avenue/Walnut Street, Walnut Street/Holly Street and Holly Street/Laurel Street. Other pedestrian and bicycle improvements are being evaluated for the new project and will be brought to the Commission at a later date.

The result of this change is a significant budget impact on the proposed San Carlos Avenue transit-oriented improvements. As discussed in the August 18 staff report, a cost estimate has not yet been prepared for the project, so it isn't possible to evaluate what the impacts will be. It's likely that the original budget would not have been enough to complete the project. If the traffic circulation concepts are approved by the Commission, a preliminary design will be prepared and costs will be estimated. There are other grant opportunities which may provide the funding to complete the project.

BACKGROUND:

The resolution (Attachment 1) calls for the Commission to make three findings:

1. That the proposed projects are in substantial conformance with the Circulation Element of the General Plan and the Bicycle Transportation Plan,
2. That the proposed projects, upon implementation of required mitigations and transportation demand measures, will not result in traffic congestion exceeding General Plan standards, and
3. That the Transportation and Circulation Commission recommends to the Planning Commission and the City Council refer to the traffic report (Attachment 2) when considering the proposed Transit Village project and the proposed San Carlos Avenue transit-oriented improvements, Project C9491

To make the first finding, the Commission needs to address the issue of Class II Bike Lanes on El Camino Real. The adopted 2003 Bicycle Transportation Plan (Attachment 3) calls for Class II Bike Lanes on El Camino Real, but the Transit Village project does not include this facility. The project does include widened sidewalks, tree planting and decorative street lights on the east side of El Camino Real to enhance walkability. In some locations, however, existing on-street parking would be eliminated to provide the wider sidewalks, which would preclude Class II Bike Lanes.

The draft update to the Bicycle Transportation Plan (Attachment 4) does not include Class II Bike Lanes on El Camino Real. Because of traffic volumes, speeds and numerous intersections, El Camino Real is a less desired route for north-south bicycle transportation than other parallel routes, including Old County Road and Elm Street. The "Transforming El Camino Real" report, prepared for the Grand Boulevard Initiative (see http://www.grandboulevard.net/documents/Transforming_El_Camino_Real_rv2.pdf) states that it is unlikely that El Camino Real will be formally designated for bike ways. It recommends consideration of 14-foot wide curb lanes and sharrows, and the Transit Village project would be consistent with these recommendations. On the basis of the new information developed since 2003, the Commission may make the finding that the Transit Village Project is in substantial conformance with the adopted Bicycle Transportation Plan.

Both projects may be found to be consistent with the goals and policies of the Circulation Element of the General Plan (Attachment 5). Both projects are consistent with a circulation system that is safe, efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and designed to serve various transportation modes in addition to the automobile. The Transit Village project maintains and improves public transportation facilities, implementing Objective 2.2 of the General Plan:

"The City shall support the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board improvement of the railroad station and adjacent parking facilities. In general, the station should act as a major transportation terminal for the City providing facilities for bus, auto parking, bicycle storage, public gathering spaces and community amenities, consistent with the historic character of the station."

The improvements to San Carlos Avenue would improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods and the transit center, another key objective of the General Plan.

Circulation Policy 4 of the General Plan calls for the City to maintain intersection service levels above the mid range of Level D, not to exceed a Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C) of 0.85. The traffic report (Attachment 2) finds that all of the study intersections, with the exception of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, would operate at an acceptable LOS C or better under "existing plus project" conditions. The intersection of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue is projected to operate at an unacceptable LOS E during the PM peak hour under "existing plus project" conditions. However, since this intersection was projected to operate at LOS E under future conditions and the project would not increase the V/C ratio by 0.01 or more, the project would not have a significant negative impact at this intersection.

Under cumulative conditions, which include the Transit Village project as well as all other development allowed in the General Plan, five of the study intersections would operate at unacceptable high-end LOS D or worse. However, the project is projected to increase the V/C ratio at only two of the five deficient intersections by 0.01 or more. Therefore, the project would have a significant impact under cumulative conditions at two intersections. The intersections are:

- El Camino Real and Holly Street (LOS D, V/C = 0.89, PM peak hour)
- Old County Road and Holly Street (LOS D, V/C = 0.89, PM peak hour)

With implementation of citywide Transportation Demand Measures (TDM) measures, the intersections of El Camino Real/Holly Street and Old County Road/Holly Street could continue to operate within the City's level of service standard. A broad range of TDM measures have been included in the project, as discussed in the August 18 staff report. Both the current and draft General Plans call for the City to implement a citywide TDM program that would require all future projects to implement similar measures.

An addendum to the traffic report (Attachment 6) has been prepared in response to questions raised by the Commission on August 18, 2009. The addendum provides illustrations of bicycle and pedestrian routes in the vicinity of the project.

A visual simulation of traffic conditions has been prepared by Hexagon Transportation Consultants. The simulation will be shown and discussed at the September 15 meeting and is available for viewing prior to the meeting at

http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/planning/projects/san_carlos_transit_village/default.asp.

In summary, the traffic report provides a thorough analysis of two projects: the proposed Transit Village project and the proposed San Carlos Avenue transit-oriented capital improvement project, C9491. Both projects may be found to be consistent with adopted plans and policies. The traffic report supports a finding that the projects, upon implementation of required mitigations and transportation demand measures, will not result in traffic congestion exceeding General Plan standards. If the questions raised by the Commission and the public have been adequately addressed, the Commission should recommend that the Planning Commission and the City Council refer to the traffic report when considering the proposed projects.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Adopt resolution (Attachment 1) recommending consideration of the Traffic Report (Attachment 2) for the proposed Transit Village project and the proposed San Carlos Avenue transit-oriented capital improvement project, C9491.
2. If additional information is needed to make the required findings, the Commission should continue the matter to its next regularly scheduled meeting.
3. Provide alternate direction to staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Weil, P.E.
Public Works Director/City Engineer

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Traffic Report (previously distributed)
3. 2003 Bicycle Transportation Plan
4. Draft Outline of 2009 Bicycle Transportation Plan
5. Circulation Element of General Plan
6. Addendum to Traffic Report